

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION:

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 15, and 17 have been canceled and claims 2, 9, 13, 16, and 18 have been amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 2-14, 16, and 18-24 are pending and under consideration.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

In the Office Action, at page 5, item 9, the Examiner indicated that claims claims 2-8, 10-12, 15, 16, and 18-24 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2 and 18 have been rewritten in independent form, the subject matter of claim 15 has been incorporated in to claim 13, and the dependence of claims 9 and 16 has been changed to claims 2 and 13, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-14, 16, and 18-24 are now allowable.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

In the Office Action, at page 2, item 2, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by Frohbieter (U.S. 4,689,966 - hereinafter Frohbieter). The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. Applicants traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration.

In the Office Action, at page 2, item 3, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 13, 14, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Zentner et al. (U.S. 6,802,369 - hereinafter Zentner). The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. Applicants traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration.

Claims 1 and 17 have been cancelled.

The subject matter of claim 15, which was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form, has been incorporated into independent claim 13.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 13 patentably distinguishes over the cited art, and should be allowable for at least the above-mentioned reasons. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14, which depends from independent claim 13, should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 13, as well as for the

additional features recited therein.

DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTION AND REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103:

In the Office Action, at page 3, item 5, the Examiner rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Frohbieter in view of Peterson et al., (US 5, 899,083 – hereinafter Peterson). The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. Applicants traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration.

In the Office Action, at page 4, item 6, the Examiner rejected claims 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Frohbieter in view of Nonaka (US 4, 689,966 – hereinafter Nonaka). The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. Applicants traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration.

In the Office Action, at page 5, item 8, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 9, 13, 14, and 17 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-23 of co-pending Application number 10/670,263 (your reference: SM2003-585.US, our docket 1594.1270). The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. Applicants traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration.

Claims 1 and 17 have been cancelled.

The subject matter of claim 15, which was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form, has been incorporated into independent claim 13.

Claim 9 now depends from independent claim 2, which was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 13 patentably distinguishes over the cited art, and should be allowable for at least the above-mentioned reasons. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14, which depends from independent claim 13, should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 13, as well as for the additional features recited therein. Further Still, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 9, which depends from now-allowable independent claim 2, should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 2, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

CONCLUSION:

In accordance with the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the cited art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

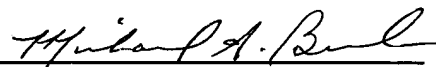
If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss resolution of such issues.

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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